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For Immediate Release
April 27, 2004

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Sen. Kuipers hails passage of abstinence-education bills

LANSING — The Senate passed two bills today that give parents a larger role in how public schools teach sex education, Sen. Wayne Kuipers, R-Holland, announced.

Kuipers' bill, Senate Bill 943, would require students be taught about the responsibility of being a parent, as well as describe adoption as a positive option for unplanned pregnancies and encourage abstinence until marriage. It also would require teaching that abstinence is the only 100-percent effective way to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

"The focus of sex-education classes in the past too often has been how to have safe sex, instead of how to say 'no'," Kuipers said.

The legislation also would create health-education advisory panels formed by local school boards. At least half of the members on the panels would have to be parents of students who attend the school districts.

"For the first time, schools will have to measure their success in achieving sex-education goals," Kuipers said.

The other bill in the package is SB 944. The bills drew strong support from the Michigan Family Forum, Citizens for Traditional Values and the Michigan Catholic Conference. After negotiations with the governor's office and the Michigan Department of Education, the administration and various educational associations support the legislation as well.

President George W. Bush proposed more funding for abstinence programs for teenagers in his State of the Union Address earlier this year.

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